

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INFORMAL EXCHANGE ON MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETINGS:
ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

REF: (A) PARIS 3320; (B) PARIS 3798

1. WE AGREE THAT OECD NEEDS ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE FOR
CONTROLLING MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETINGS PROVIDING LARGER
AND CLEARLY SPECIFIED ROLE FOR COUNCIL.

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2. CONSONANT WITH COUNCIL'S ROLE AS THE DECISION-TAKING
BODY OF THE OECD, IF AND WHEN A PARTICULAR OECD COMMITTEE
BELIEVES MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING WOULD BE APPROPRIATE,
COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO COUNCIL
FOR DECISION. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD PERMIT INFORMAL HEADS
OF DELEGATION DISCUSSION IN ADVANCE OF COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

AND WOULD ALSO AFFORD TIME FOR CONSULTATION WITH AND WITHIN CAPITALS.

3. PERHAPS A COUNCIL DECISION OR NEW SECTION IN ORGANIZATION'S RULES OF PROCEDURE SPECIFYING MODALITIES FOR MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETINGS OF OECD BODIES SUBORDINATE TO THE COUNCIL WOULD BE APPROPRIATE WAY TO FORMALIZE NEW AGREEMENT. WE WOULD WANT TO ENSURE, HOWEVER, THAT IEA RETAINS ITS

STATUS AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY WITHIN THE OECD FRAMEWORK AND THAT IT IS NOT RPT NOT TREATED FOR THIS (OR ANY OTHER) PURPOSE AS AN OECD BODY SUBORDINATE TO THE COUNCIL.

4. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO FEBRUARY 13 HEADS OF DELEGATION DISCUSSION OF PROCEDURES FOR ARRANGING OECD MEETINGS AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. IN CASE PROPOSED ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEES MINISTERIALS ARE CITED BY OTHERS AS SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, YOU SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH TO SEE THESE MINISTERIALS POSTPONED. PROPOSED DATES AFFORD AMPLE TIME FOR CONSULTATIONS, SHOULD ANY PERMREP INDICATE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TIME FOR THIS PURPOSE.

5. IF NECESSARY, YOU MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING WITH RESPECT TO THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINISTERIAL:

A. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY ARGUED IN THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE THAT ANY MINISTERIAL SHOULD BE CAREFULLY FOCUSSED AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LESS DEMANDING OF AVAILABLE OECD AND NATIONAL RESOURCES THAN THE COMMITTEE'S FIRST MINISTERIAL (NOV. 1974). IT SHOULD NOT REPEAT THE 1974 EXERCISE WHERE 10 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS WERE DEVELOPED IN A PAINFULLY INTENSE AND TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS. THE EXISTING OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED MINISTERIAL (C(77)1) WILL HAVE TO UNDERGO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEXT WEEKS TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE THAT THE SESSION WILL BE MEANINGFUL. SOME OF THE SPECIFIC POINTS MADE BELOW MIGHT SERVE AS SUGGESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE SHARPENING OF FOCUS.

B. IF THESE CAVEATS ARE HEEDDED, THERE IS A GOOD CASE FOR HOLDING A SECOND MINISTERIAL IN EARLY 1979:

-- A GREAT DEAL HAS TRANSPIRED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD SINCE 1974, INCLUDING SIGNIFICANTLY INTENSIFIED ATTENTION TO SOME VERY SERIOUS ISSUES NOT FOCUSSED ON IN DETAIL FOUR YEARS AGO (E.G., TOXIC SUBSTANCES, ENERGY-ENVIRONMENT ISSUES-INCLUDING MATTER OF COOPERATION AMONG INVOLVED OECD AGENCIES).

-- DURING THE COMING MONTHS, DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF CONTROL OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES MAY WELL MOVE TO THE STAGE WHERE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL AND/OR OTHER ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT APPROPRIATELY BE PLACED BEFORE OECD ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS.

-- CERTAIN NEW ENVIRONMENT ISSUES ARE BECOMING MORE IMPORTANT AS SOME OF THE "PURE" POLLUTION CONTROL ISSUES ARE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL: E.G., LAND USE MANAGEMENT, IMPACTS

ON EMPLOYMENT LEVELS AND POLICIES; LOW WASTE TECHNOLOGY, RESOURCE CONSERVATION, AND RECYCLING; ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENT; PREVENTATIVE POLICIES SUCH AS PROCESS CHANGES.

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-- OVER FOUR YEARS WILL HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE FIRST MINISTERIAL, AND RENEWED HIGH LEVEL ATTENTION WITHIN THE OECD TO THE IMPORTANT AREA OF ENVIRONMENT (WITH ALL ITS "HORIZONTAL" IMPLICATIONS) WOULD SEEM APPROPRIATE. SUCH A MINISTERIAL ALSO OBVIOUSLY HELPS PROMOTE OECD AS A VEHICLE FOR COOPERATION IN THE MINISTERS' FIELDS.

C. APROPOS TIMING, PUSHING THE MINISTERIAL BACK IN TIME COULD CREATE A CONFLICT WITH A POTENTIAL ECE SPONSORED HIGH LEVEL ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE LATE IN 1979. CHRISTOPHER

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